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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon the experiences of a participant in the Visiting Professor Program sponsored by the Advertising Education Foundation of the American Advertising Federation and the American Academy of Advertising, this paper discusses the advantages such programs can have for both the host company and the participant. The first section of the paper describes the Visiting Professor Program, a summer program that places professors in advertising agencies for 8 weeks, and the experiences of one of the participants during a summer with the Ogilvy and Mather agency. The second section examines how the program has benefitted both host and participant, while the third presents impressions of the experiences. The fourth section offers teaching ideas for the advertising course drawn from the program, and the fifth presents ideas for improving the advertising curriculum. The sixth section discusses the roles of the visiting professor, specifically those of diplomat, representative, and network builder. The concluding section offers suggestions for developing and promoting the internship concept. (FL)

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THE PROFESSOR AS INTERN: APPROACHES TO TEACHING ADVERTISING CREATIVITY

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INTRODUCTION

Much discussion in advertising education concerns the quality and quantity of contact between academic and professional worlds. Most of our efforts entail bringing professionals into the classroom to speak or teach, and sending students into the professional arena as interns. An alternative is to send the professor into the workplace as intern, thus expanding the experience of the educator who is eager and able to pass it on to a maximum number of students. This approach is especially beneficial to younger professors or those with less professional media experience.

The advertising industry has an organized internship program of just this nature. This paper describes the program from the writer's personal experience as a participant. It shares ideas for teaching and for curriculum design, and suggests development of the internship concept to serve other communications areas.

THE VISITING PROFESSOR PROGRAM

The Visiting Professor Program is sponsored by the Advertising Education Foundation of the American Advertising Federation and the American Academy of Advertising. It places professors in advertising agencies or corporate advertising divisions, in departments of their choice, for eight weeks in the summer. Most of the assignments are to top agencies in New York City. An apartment and living expenses are provided by the agency. Barton A. Cummings of Compton Advertising, Inc. organized the program in 1980 and is its primary coordinator. Seventy-three professors have participated, from three in 1981 to 23 in 1984.

My experience in professional advertising was narrower than that of some applicants, but my familiarity with public communications in general was probably broader. Over the past 15 years I have worked as an advertising and public relations design consultant, a newspaper department editor, and a free-lance writer and photographer. I have taught graphic arts, writing and principles courses for five years.

I was assigned to Ogilvy & Mather, Inc., one of the world's four largest agencies, in summer 1983. I was the first of O&M's Visiting Professors to request the creative area. The agency's executive vice-president creative, Norman Berry, placed me for my first three weeks in account management so that I could sample the business end of advertising, before moving me to creative.

The management account was Publishers Clearing House, just before its enormous June flight of TV commercials promoting its sweepstakes. It was a very busy period during which I attended location shoots, studio editing sessions and client presentations. One of my duties was to do network rotation schedules, assigning as many as four of a dozen available commercials to each daytime soap opera.

On the creative side, I spent days to weeks sitting with creative teams on each of several accounts, including Maxwell House Coffee and several Lever Brothers products. I was involved in conceptual brain-storming, strategy planning, production sessions and presentations of television and print ads. On one new product account, I studied laboratory and marketing research reports, made some sketches, and came up with a visual concept that resulted in a storyboard.

APPROACHES TO A PROFESSORIAL INTERNSHIP

Eight weeks is less than a college quarter. It takes some mental organization, and not a little assertiveness, on the part of the Visiting Professor in order for him or her to reap its maximum benefits. The obvious goal is for the visitor to observe everyday activities in order to get a feel for the current tenor of the business, and to gather teaching ideas.

In addition, it helps to have at least one clearly defined goal. During past years, participants have undertaken projects that benefited their sponsoring companies as well as themselves. One professor made an analysis of the personnel and functions of two departments, which resulted in recommendations for operational changes that were implemented by the agency. Research findings of several Visiting Professors have been used not only by their hosts, but also in the professors' own scholarly papers. A professor who contributed creative concepts that were used in an advertising campaign was offered a professional position (she declined). Two agencies set up lunchtime lecture sessions wherein their Visiting Professors addressed young employees.

My goal was to investigate the requirements and procedures for the hiring of junior creative people, in order to help the Newhouse School develop its creative advertising curriculum.

IMPRESSIONS: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL

The impressions my student interns record in the journals they are required to keep are always illuminating. In rereading my own journal, I find that, like them, I experienced some initial confusion, but eventually emerged with more professional insights than I had anticipated.

Disorientation is natural to any new position, but mine was compounded by having two offices in eight weeks, and having mail, telephone calls and even expense reimbursements delayed or lost in an enormous agency. My itinerary as Visiting Professor had been outlined in a four-page letter, but my duties, if any, were nebulous. Once I engaged the help of a couple of good secretaries, I was able to take charge of my schedule. The more assertive I got, the more I learned.

I asked a lot of questions in a lot of places. When I left Ogilvy & Mather, I had talked to more than 60 people in all positions, from Ken Roman, the president, to the front-door security guards. I was impressed by the complexity of daily operations, the many people involved in making decisions, the large proportion of women in management positions and the number of employees who teach, both inside and outside the agency.

I discovered one very sensitive area: proprietary information. Nervousness about confidential matters appears to grow in direct proportion to the size and newness of an account -- and in an agency of Ogilvy's size, the stakes run in the millions of dollars. Occasionally I was frustrated when different people gave me conflicting directions on what information was confidential.

TEACHING IDEAS FOR CREATIVE COURSES

The ideas were everywhere, many of them in the O&M's own training programs and literature. David Ogilvy's and Ken Roman's books are of course very popular in classrooms. However, I was surprised at the conscientiousness with which employees quoted and applied Ogilvy's philosophies. This tendency, plus my observations of creative people at work, both confirmed and clarified

the best of creative teaching techniques.

Creativity in advertising is, first, a team effort, from strategy through production. We too often ask students to work individually, following a traditional pattern of lecture-assign-collect-grade-return. In advertising, this can be both unrealistic and unstimulating. It is also easier to make up assignments than to seek out real clients, when real cases inspire a much higher degree of motivation and participation, as well as enhance the reputation of the school and its students. Thus:

- Students should work together in copy writer/art director teams, sitting in circles instead of rows of chairs. They should take turns at playing various roles, and at criticizing each others' work.
- As individuals and as team members, students should be allowed the time and freedom to explore and develop their creative brain-storming skills, styles and judgment.
- Because conceptualization is a team effort, copy writers and art directors both must develop verbal and visualization skills.
- The student who learns only to write for television is missing a vital dimension. Junior copy writers customarily write for print before moving into television.
- The creative person should be able to write campaign strategies as well as follow them.
- Students must be able to express themselves clearly for every occasion, but especially for client presentations, which they should make in front of real clients. They should learn to deal with sudden changes in strategy, and with rejection of their ideas, both by peers and clients.

The single most significant request expressed by the people at Ogilvy & Mather was, "Teach them how to think." Certainly that's the toughest challenge for any kind of education, and it should be a function of the liberal arts curriculum as well as the professional major. But in terms of encouraging them to think like advertising professionals, the teaching approaches listed are, at least, realistic.

This summer I am incorporating these ideas in a graphic arts production course in which students will team up to plan and design a real advertising campaign for presentation to a client. Before we start on this project, I will be making practice assignments based on my agency notes on strategy and campaign development, product testing, storyboards and client presentations. These assignments are designed to be relevant, challenging and fun. Overall, I have resolved to spoonfeed my students less and make them dig more for their creative concepts.

Notes are one reward of the internship. Another is teaching materials: examples of good copy writing, design and typography. I requested and got dozens of print ads, an agency reel, a type font negative from a photocompositor, a set of color progs, and some sketches. I took my 35mm camera to location shoots and editing studios to shoot slides for classes.

ADVERTISING CURRICULUM IDEAS

INTEGRATE STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT MAJORS: In order to develop an understanding of the complex, dynamic business of advertising, students should explore and play many roles. For the professor, this means making the extra effort to include art directors in copy writing courses, creative students in media courses, and so

forth. Students should trade roles in various projects, regardless of their majors. Although I was told that prospective junior employees should apply to specific departments, I met an account supervisor who transferred from media planning, creative people who moved over from account management, and copy writers who graduated from art schools.

TEACH TECHNOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: Students should learn how to use both print and electronic media, including the newest technologies. In O&M's research department I observed new advertising approaches being developed for videotext. At a visual communications trade show I attended while in New York City, I noted specific trends in photographic media. In view of potential "merging" of communications media as a result of electronic technologies, students should study commonalities as well as differences.

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR CAREERS: One of my goals was to learn as much as possible about the requirements and procedures for the hiring of junior copy writers and art directors. I did thir by interviewing creative hiring personnel at Ogilvy & Mather and professional head-hunters in New York City. I examined dozens of copy writers' and art directors' portfolios. I concluded that:

- Development of creative books should start in the sophomore year. Books should be updated and reviewed regularly, preferably by professionals.
- Both copy writers' and art directors' portfolios must contain art AND copy. They should include no more than a dozen samples of original ads created outside class. Because concepts are more important than art, ads may be comped instead of finished.

- New graduates and prospective interns should not approach agencies to request interviews without first studying the agencies' accounts.

If the school cannot arrange for a course or a particular faculty member to prepare creative students for job-hunting, perhaps a club can. Newhouse now has an organization whose goals are to advise students on developing their portfolios, invite professionals to review portfolios, and contact recruiters on behalf of graduating seniors. I am co-adviser to The Creative Club, which was started last year by a faculty member who is Newhouse's 1984 participant in the Visiting Professor Program.

ROLES OF THE PROFESSORIAL INTERN

The Visiting Professor is far more than an observer. He or she also plays roles of:

DIPLOMAT: Jock Elliott, Ogilvy & Mather's chairman emeritus, is the man who, in an interview in Ad Age in 1982, said, "I think [college advertising education] is a complete waste of time ... it's tragic that people should spend time in college on advertising or marketing ... that's their last opportunity to broaden their horizons. They've got the rest of their lives to study their careers, to study advertising ...."

When I interviewed Jock Elliott, he was somewhat more positive. He admitted that advertising courses can help students break in, but he warned that there aren't many jobs. He emphasized the importance of writing and editing skills. His Ad Age quote was my opportunity to argue that the typical Bachelor's program includes three years of liberal arts and one of professional courses. Certainly writing is emphasized throughout.

REPRESENTATIVE: The professor is his or her own best example, not only as a person, but as a professional educator. I think we all make assumptions about life on the "other side" of wherever we are, whether it be academic/professional, agency/client or whatever. One assumption about education is that someone who is teaching a subject like advertising must be washed up as a professional.

The truth is, there is no "other side." We're really sharing knowledge, and have been all along. That's the purpose of the exchanges that can result from an internship, e.g. professionals visiting classrooms, and educators promoting their programs and graduates to potential employers.

NETWORK BUILDER: The internship is an opportunity to build contacts in the school's job network. I contacted Syracuse University alumni at Ogilvy & Mather and attended a Newhouse School alumni reception in Manhattan. I asked agency hiring personnel and professional head-hunters where they look for bright young people. One of Ogilvy & Mather's sources for creative juniors is the University of Texas at Austin. Now the Newhouse School has invited Dr. Leonard Ruben of UT to teach in Syracuse during fall semester. Recruiters are most willing to visit new schools, if only they are asked.

DEVELOPING THE INTERNSHIP CONCEPT

Many of the Ogilvy people seemed to think that my experience would convert me to the idea of joining an agency. Obviously it did not; my occupational interests are academic. However, it did corvert me to the concept of AAF's Visiting Professor Program.

I urge professors of creative courses to apply. Although the program overall has enlarged its enrollment by nearly 800 percent in five years, fewer than 10 percent of its participants have requested creative assignments.

Of course, neither the concept of professorial internships nor the practice of professional summer employment is new. But the idea of an organized program that processes applications and places educators in top-ranked companies is very attractive. It brings participants up to date with current trends in the largest markets. It makes contacts for professors that they might not be able to make for themselves. Young and less-experienced professors especially can benefit. An organized internship program affords opportunities for faculty members to advance the reputations of their schools, their students and themselves.

It is with these ideas in mind that I suggest that the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications is an ideal vehicle for sponsoring an internship program, not only in advertising, but in other communications areas. In practical terms, of course, this would require a substantial administrative commitment. But with cooperating professional organizations and host companies paying all or part of the (deductible) expenses in the interests of education, the burden on AEJMC would be greatly lessened. The purpose of this paper has been to demonstrate some of the rewards accruing to the host company as well as to the professor and his or her students.